

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

Office of Publication: 1421 East Main Street, St. Charles, Illinois. Send all Editorial matter or matter for publication to: 214 W. Wesley, Wheaton, Illinois.

An Independent Christian Weekly, Standing for the Verbal Inspiration, of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, His Blood Atonement, Salvation by Faith, New Testament Soul Winning and the Premillennial Return of Christ. Opposes Modernism, Worldliness, and Formalism.

VOLUME XII, NO. 47

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1945

8 Months, \$1.00; 18 Months, \$2.00

BARRIERS to BLESSING

By Rev. William Herschel Ford, D.D., Pastor, Kirkwood Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia

"And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay."—Mark 2:4.

As a school boy I remember reading the old story about the dykes of Holland. One day one of these dykes sprang a leak and the water began pouring in through a certain hole. But a heroic boy thrust his arm into the hole, held the waters back and saved the city from possible destruction. I am afraid that you and I have held back some waters too, the waters of blessing. God has wanted to bless us, but our lives have not been what they should have been. We have held back the blessing. He has wanted to bless other lives through us and we have held back His blessing from them, also.

In the text we see Jesus preaching in a certain house. A crowd has gathered, a crowd which fills the whole house and overflows into the court-yard. Every door is blocked by a mass of humanity. Down the street lay a sick man. Although he was sick, he was a fortunate man for he had four friends who wanted to bring him to Jesus. They went down to get him, but they could not bring him into the presence of Jesus because of the crowd. This crowd erected a barrier between the man and the blessing Jesus had for him. You remember how they took him up on the roof and let him down

into the healing, forgiving presence of the Saviour. We, too, have been barriers to blessing. If we are not living as we ought to live, if our hearts are not right in God's sight, we erect barriers which keep blessings from us and from others.

The Christian life is a thing of the spirit. It is the spirit that you (Continued on page seven)



DR. WM. HERSCHEL FORD

Famous Men Boost Sword

GET YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS IN NOW AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SPECIAL ATTRACTIVE PREMIUMS

By Evangelist Robert J. Wells, Associate Editor

We have just received some congratulatory letters from a number of the outstanding Christian leaders in the United States and Canada, all friends of the editor, expressing their greetings on the occasion of the editor's fiftieth birthday and this special subscription campaign. Knowing of the great interest the readers of The Sword of the Lord have in the campaign and because of the many messages of congratulation which are pouring in from those who appreciate the ministry of this paper, we are presenting a few of the letters to you.

From Dr. Bob Jones, Sr.

"I am sending a check for \$100.00 to help increase the circulation of The Sword of the Lord. You can make your own list of ministers or laymen.

"I want to help get this periodical into the hands of as many people as possible. I do not know any religious periodical in America

that is doing quite as much for real evangelism as The Sword of the Lord.

"Here's hoping we can give our good and unselfish friend, Dr. John R. Rice, on Dec. 11th, 1945, a birthday present of even more than 50,000 circulation for The Sword of the Lord.

"Bob Jones College and my son and I, personally, are for you and Dr. Rice and The Sword of the Lord."

Cordially yours,
(Signed) Bob Jones, Sr., Founder, Bob Jones College, Cleveland, Tenn.

From Dr. H. A. Ironside

"It is a pleasure to extend greetings and appreciation to Dr. John R. Rice on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday. While he is still comparatively quite a youth from the standpoint of an old man like myself, yet fifty years is a long period of time after all, ac-

(Continued on page three)

More About CHRIST IN THE HOME

- I. Develop the Christian Grace of Hospitality
- II. Give God the Children

By Evangelist John R. Rice

(Continued from last week.)

Develop the Christian Grace of Hospitality

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2). Christians are to be "given to hospitality," says Romans 12:13. The warm welcome for friend or stranger, the open heart and hand to the needy, are marks of the Christian home.

A bishop or a pastor of a church is particularly commanded to be "given to hospitality" (1 Tim. 3:2) and "a lover of hospitality" (Titus 1:8). You see, hospitality is a particularly important mark of a Christian home.

The impact of a Christian home on a community cannot be felt largely unless the doors are opened many times to others. So have people in your home. Other Christians should share the fellowship of the home. Unsaved people should see the sweet joy of a Christian home, should bow their heads for thanks at the table, should be present at the family worship, should see the Christian standards and ideals of a Bible kind of home. It is good to have an extra bedroom for guests. Many homes cannot do that, but someone can sleep on the divan or a day bed, or on a folding cot or a pallet and make room for a guest.

Children with a hospitable father and mother are always proud of their home, and are glad to bring their friends home. In our own home it has turned out especially happy for us that our children select their best friends to bring to the house, and that the young people usually prefer to gather in our home than to go elsewhere. With a number of children, with a rather happy home, and with a welcome for their friends, we have had little trouble to keep our children off the streets or from bad company.

So many Christian parents tell their children they are not to go to dances, they are not to attend movies, and they are not to go to this place or that; but they do not make their own homes a haven and a center of happy fellowship for their children. Have the young people as guests! An innocent party with games and perhaps some gospel songs and inexpensive refreshments will do more to keep young people happy and loving their homes than many a lecture. If parents love company, meet the young people and know them by name, join in their conversation and sometimes in their games, they will be taken into the hearts and confidences of the young people. Mothers and fathers ought not to let their young people grow out of touch and out of fellowship with the home. Sometimes parents must know when to let the young people have their good times alone, but a happy fellowship will mean that very rarely are the parents not welcome in the fun. Let

us make the home happy for young people. Musical instruments, a radio, some good phonograph records, interesting pictures and games are proper equipment for a home. And mothers and fathers, if they are really happy Christians and if their own children are properly reared, can have prayer or testimony at a party without its seeming dull or out of place.

Lot, the righteous man who vexed his soul with the men of Sodom where he lived, insisted that the two angels come into his home to spend the night. I do not know whether Lot knew that these were angels. They looked

like men and were called men. But in the destruction of the wicked city, these same angels saved Lot's life and that of his wife and that of his two daughters. Hospitality is a great virtue, but it is also a great blessing.

In II Kings 4:8-17 is told a beautiful and remarkable story of hospitality and its rewards.

"And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool; and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day,

THE ONLY REQUISITE FOR SALVATION

By Evangelist Robert J. Wells, Th.D.

(Preached Over Radio Station WING, Dayton, Ohio, Sunday, Oct. 28, 1945)

Text: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."—Rom. 4:5.

In these few words we have God's plan of salvation set forth in a remarkably clear way. Many voices have been raised to tell men how to be saved. Many different plans and methods, schemes and suggestions have been offered. I want to make it clear that I am not here to give you another idea, or any new suggestions, about how to get saved. I am here to bring you the message of God. I want you to read this verse carefully and to believe it implicitly. If you will do this, and then obey its instructions, apart from anything any man may say, you will be saved.

I. "To Him That Worketh Not"

First of all, God addresses this passage "to him that worketh not . . ." This portion has a very strategic position in the Epistle in which it is found. After a few verses of introduction in chapter one, the apostle Paul uses the remaining part of the chapter, all of chapter 2, and through verse 23 of chapter 3 to prove the whole world guilty before God, to demonstrate conclusively that Jew and Gentile alike are wicked sinners, that man has no righteousness of his own, and that he is totally depraved. The whole first section of the book of Romans is given over to the fact of man's condemnation. Then in the last eight verses of chapter 3, and continuing through chapters 4 and 5, Paul tells men, the same wicked, ungodly, unrighteous, condemned men, how they may be made just as if they had never sinned—how they may be cleansed from their sin and made righteous before God. It is in this strategic position that we find our text.

The first thing Paul says is that salvation from sin, or justification, or righteousness is "to him that (Continued on page seven)



DR. ROBERT J. WELLS

that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life."

The "great woman" of Shunem loved to have the prophet of God visit her home. She had made a little chamber on the wall and had set there a bed and a table and a stool and a candlestick. There Elisha, the lonely man of God, bowed down with the spiritual burdens of the nation, came to rest, with his servant, as often as he passed that way. Through this same man of God the woman of Shunem was given the desire of her heart, a son. Later through this same man of God the child was restored to life after he had died. How great are the blessings of those who open their homes to the ministers of God!

The children who grow up in a preacher's home, on the average show more vision and character and leadership than children of other homes. Part of this, no doubt, is because of the influence of their own father, the high moral standards, the reverence, the Word of God in the home. But part of it also must be the result of frequent contact with great men who visit in a pastor's home.

It was always the pride of my father's family that his home was a home for every passing man of God. When some earnest preacher came to preach in our town, he was often invited to have dinner or spend the night in our home. The rural missionary turned his horse into our gate without any question of the welcome which would be offered him. As a result I was accustomed from my boyhood to conversation about revivals, about Bible doctrine, testimonies of conversions, to talk of Christian colleges and of foreign missions. Many a time I sat on the floor, very quietly, long past my usual bedtime, and heard my father and visiting preachers tell of wonderful conversions they had witnessed, of answers to prayer they had received, of great sermons they had heard, and of the work of God. Did not my heart burn within me? From the preacher-colporteur we got Christian books that helped to mold my life. I longed to be like those men that I respected and loved: the fervent, compassionate cowboy preacher, Perry Harmonson; the saintly John Longan; the lovable R. H. Gibson, and others. And I could never get away from the fact that I was named for two preachers, dear friends of my

father's, John Power and R. R. Gaines, who had often visited our home and with whom my father had labored in a useful rural ministry.

A Christian home should throw wide its doors to the minister and the missionary as well as others who need the haven and the fellowship, the restful bed and the refreshing meal of a Christian home.

Give God the Children!

David Livingstone, the African missionary and explorer who suffered much for Christ, is quoted as saying, "The word 'sacrifice' is not in my vocabulary." Anything a Christian can give to God already belongs to God. In Romans 12:1 is this earnest entreaty: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." It is your "reasonable service" if you give yourself up to live or to die, if you lay yourself wholly on the altar for God. Certainly a Christian home wants to put Christ first.

That will mean that Christ is first in the property of the home. Christians, of course, will want to tithe. Any Christian who cannot give God ten per cent of his income, plus free will offerings as God leads him, certainly does not love God as he ought, nor trust Him as much as he might. Christians ought to give tithes and offerings. How blessed it is to seek first "the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" and to know that food and drink and clothing and shelter, "all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). So the Saviour promised, and so, thank God, I, with thousands of others, have found that He fulfills His promise.

I well remember the first car I owned, a secondhand model T Ford touring car. We dedicated the car to God, and my wife and I prayed that God would help us to use it to serve Him. We picked up many a hitchhiker, and a number of souls were won to Christ in that battered old touring car. And with every car we have owned, we have had a dedicatory prayer, and have solemnly and earnestly given it to God and begged God to use it for His glory. All that a Christian has belongs to God.

Sometimes people argue about the Christian's money. There is no such thing as a Christian's money. It is God's money in the hands of the Christian, as are all the other things that God lets us have in trusteeship for a season.

Giving of money and serving God in public services have been discussed elsewhere in this book. Here let me lay on your heart the honest duty to give your children to God. God wants your children. He wants them given to Him in prayerful dedication, wants them reared for His glory, wants them to be surrendered for His service and trained for it.

In Luke 10:2 Jesus said, "Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." Do you pray the Lord of the harvest "that he would send forth labourers into his harvest"? If any honest Christian prays that God will lay His hand upon labourers, call them, fit them, anoint them and press them into the harvest field, how can he withhold his own children from God? How can any Christian pray, "Send some other mother's boy, some other's beloved son to preach the gospel"?

How can any Christian claim to love God with all his heart and mind and soul unless he be willing for his children to serve the Lord too?

My mother went to Heaven when I was five years old, nearly six. Nineteen years later I, a young college instructor, was visiting my aunt, my mother's sister in Amarillo, Texas. As we looked through some old books a letter

fell out, and aunt Essie said, "John, do you want to read that letter? Do you know who wrote it?"

"Yes, I want to read it. It looks like my mother's handwriting." I had seen some old love letters of my mother's written to my father before they were married. So with eager fingers I took up this letter, written more than twenty years before from my mother to her sister.

It came from a dry Texas farm south of San Antonio. It ran something like this:

"It is very hot here. We need a rain very badly. Willie [my father] is not very well, working in the heat." The letter continued and my dear mother wrote, as a young mother would, about her children. "The baby, Porter, is mighty sweet. Gertrude [my older sister] is so good to help me take care of the baby and to dry the dishes and 'help mother.' And Ruth [my younger sister] is the quietest little thing you ever saw. George [my younger brother] is into mischief from morning till night and yet you can't help but love him. And my little preacher boy is getting along fine. Let me tell you what he said, . . ."

Suddenly I stopped reading. Mother had mentioned all the other children. Nobody else could be her preacher boy but me! I said to Aunt Essie, "Did she call me her preacher boy?"

"She never called you anything else!" said Aunt Essie.

So my mother thought of me as her preacher boy! I now remembered that when I was four years old, when visitors would ask me, "What is your name, little man?" I was taught to answer them, "I am John the Baptist preacher!"

Not long after I read mother's letter which had lain away so many years since she had written it with loving fingers. I went to Decatur, Texas, and there saw my father and talked to him. I said, "Dad, I read a letter of Mama's in which she called me her preacher boy. Tell me about it."

My father said, "Son, when you were born, we gave you to God and asked God to make you a preacher. Your mother was so glad she had a boy so he could preach the gospel. She always planned for you to be a preacher and prayed that God would take you for that purpose."

"Why didn't you tell me, Dad?" I asked.

"We wanted God to tell you," he said.

And God did tell me. It wasn't long until I had given way to that inner urge, that constant longing and hunger of my heart to preach the gospel, and had stepped out by faith, giving up my college teaching, giving up a contract and some bright hopes for the future, in order to preach the gospel of the grace of God for poor wicked sinners!

I know now that before I was born I was destined to be a preacher of the gospel. I know that my mind and heart were colored and controlled very largely by the Lord in answer to my mother's devoted prayer. I know that to this end God protected me. I know that all the lonely years after my mother was taken away, all the hardship and poverty, all the years of preparation were to this end. I had thought I would be a college teacher and then a college president, and perhaps later a senator, who knows? I had beautiful dreams and built air castles. But one June night in 1921 when I was doing graduate work in the University of Chicago, I visited the Pacific Garden Mission to sing and do personal work. There my mother's prayers caught up with me, and I saw that I could never have any joy, any peace, any really adequate occupation except in winning souls. I was called to preach, dedicated to preach, and preaching must be my life work, my passion, my joy, my labor, and my destiny.

In a great class in the theological seminary I remember that

there was a poll of the ministerial students. How many were saved before ten years old? A large percentage of them. How many were given to God by their fathers and mothers? Most of the preachers there who turned out to be real soul winners, greatly used men of God were. They grew up in an atmosphere of prayer. They were educated and trained with holy thoughts and aspirations of mothers and fathers who pleaded that God would see fit to take what they offered, their dearest and best gifts, their boys.

My own six daughters were given to God at birth. I had longed for a son that he might preach the gospel. If I had ten sons, I would be grieved and disappointed if every one of them did not spend his life in some full-time service for Christ. But God saw fit to give me daughters, and I gave them to God. Their mother joined me in the happy dedication and in the earnest prayer that God would take them and would use them.

There was a time when I felt, "If God wants one of my girls to be a foreign missionary, I will surrender to it. It may be I will weep, as other fathers weep to see their girls go to a far off land from whence they may never return in this world. I may fear the sleeping sickness of Africa or the communist bandits of China, or the other dangers that beset a missionary, but I will be resigned. I will surrender to God's will and dry my tears the best I can." So I thought once. But at last I saw that that was not the way a Christian ought to feel. Resigned to see one of my daughters go as a missionary? No, not resigned, but gloriously grateful! If God can use one of mine, or all of mine, oh, praise His name, what a joy that is! At the breakfast table sometime since I told my six daughters, "If any of you marries a man who does not spend his life in full-time service for God, then either you will have married the wrong man, or he will be out of the will of God." I told them that so many prayers, so many tears, such labor, such expense, and so much of holy surrender and dedication and pleading had gone into their birth and training and education, that no one had a right to all the fruits of it but God! So if God will take mine, He may have them. If God should see fit to use them at home, where they can be near me and I can see them, I will be humbly grateful. If God sees fit to use them in a far off country telling the gospel, I will praise the Lord. One of them is now married to a young missionary student, and they hope to spend their life on 'the roof of the world' as missionaries in Tibet. Well and good. God has done so much for me that I could not, I would not withhold from him my lovely daughters.

Oh, let me plead with mothers and fathers that you give your children to Christ! Make sure that the best happiness they will ever have will be as they serve the Lord Jesus, as they win precious souls for Him and as they lay up treasures in Heaven that no one else can ever have but those who give themselves full time to the Master's service. If my daughters can marry preachers and missionaries, then praise the Lord! Or if they should remain unmarried and serve the Lord, well and good. God deserves all we have. No one gives God very much who is not willing also to give his own sons and daughters.

One who gives his children to Christ must rear them for Him. Better lay on the lash, better have stripes, and tears, and heartbreak and a rigid insistence on a godly standard of living, than to let the dear child miss his destiny as a man of God! Better withhold your young folk from the sins and dangers of worldly amusements than let them have the fleeting joys of the present and miss the eternal rewards of soul winners.

If you expect God to use your children, you should set out to see

that they are educated for the Lord. That is one reason for a Christian college instead of a secular and Christ-rejecting, Bible-denying university. If Christ is to be first in the home, then see that He is given the children.

Conclusion: Accept Christ Today!

Now we come to a close in this tender exhortation that you make Christ the head of your home. Would you not like to put yourself on record, each member of the family who has accepted Christ or who will now accept Christ, and sign your names together as trusting Him for forgiveness and salvation, surrendering your hearts and lives to Him and giving Him the reins, making Him the Lord of the home? If so, will you not sign this statement today, particularly those of you who have not heretofore accepted Christ as your Saviour. I suggest that you then copy or clip out the statement and send it to me with your signatures. How glad I will be to receive it! How happy your home will be if you do it and mean it.

Evangelist John R. Rice
214 W. Wesley Street
Wheaton, Illinois
Dear Mr. Rice:

Having read the above chapter on "Making Christ Head of the Home," we, the undersigned members of our family, do here and now decide that we will take Christ as our own Saviour, that we will let Him be Lord of our lives and Lord of our home. Realizing that we are sinners, and depending on Christ to forgive our sins and save our souls, we here and now claim Him and receive Him and trust Him. We will try to live for Him from this day forth.

(Signed)..... Father
..... Mother

Address

I trust that many of you will write me that you have accepted Christ as your Saviour and have won your family to join you in this holy decision to make Christ the head of your home and Lord of your lives.

If one reads this who has not accepted Christ, or who is not sure about the matter, I will be glad to send further help on receiving your inquiry.

And now may God bless your home and mine!

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Published weekly. Publication office, c/o The Sword of the Lord, 1421 East Main Street, St. Charles, Illinois. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at St. Charles, Illinois, on January 5, 1945.

EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE
D.D., LITT. D.,

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Evangelist Robert J. Wells, Th. D.
Associate Editor

Subscription Price: \$1.00 for 3 months; \$2.00 for 12 months. Canada and foreign countries \$2.00 a year.

Famous Men Boost Sword

(Continued from page one)

cording to the span of life men are permitted to spend on this earth. What a wonderful thing to celebrate such a Jubilee as a servant of Christ, who has given many years to sounding out the gospel of the grace of God!

"May the Lord, if He tarry, give many more fruitful years to His servant, and thus add to his crown of rejoicing in that day.

Faithfully yours in Christ,"
(Signed) H. A. Ironside, Pastor
Moody Memorial Church, Chicago.

From Dr. Oswald J. Smith

"Ever since knowing that Dr. John R. Rice would be fifty years of age on December 11th, I have been most interested in your appeal for new subscriptions. I certainly trust that God will abundantly bless your effort and that you will realize your goal.

"I know of no paper that is reaching the unsaved for Christ like **The Sword of the Lord**. Its messages on salvation are clear and explicit. I, myself, have had a number of inquiries from those who have read my gospel messages in it, and I know the people who read it are deeply interested.

"In these days of modernism, it is necessary to hammer away continually on the great truths of salvation so that people will not be misled. The way must be made plain, and that **The Sword of the Lord** does.

"The evangelistic work of Dr. Rice has been of the utmost value during these past years. He has gone out after the unsaved and has won them to Christ. God has abundantly honored his ministry.

"I count it a real privilege to know him as a friend, and my prayer is that the future years may be better than the past. May God abundantly bless him on his fiftieth birthday.

"With my very best wishes, I remain, Yours in His victory,"
(Signed) Oswald J. Smith, Pastor
The Peoples Church, Toronto, Can.

From Dr. W. B. Riley

"It gives me pleasure to say of Dr. John R. Rice, that after twenty years or more of close acquaintance with him, I consider him a faithful servant of the Lord and an efficient evangelist. Also, I wish to add that his magazine, **The Sword of the Lord**, is an excellent medium of evangelism.

"With the best of wishes, I am,
Most fraternally,"

(Signed) W. B. Riley, President,
Northwestern Theological Seminary and Bible Training School,
Minneapolis, Minn.

From Dr. Torrey M. Johnson

"Thank God for the vision of John R. Rice. Through sacrifice, prayer, and courage, he has been used of God to usher in a new day of mass evangelism. **The Sword of the Lord** has given thunderous voice, calling our attention to the need of revival. May it increase more and more and the spirit of evangelism grow until revival comes.

Your friend in Christ,"

(Signed) Torrey M. Johnson, President
Youth for Christ International.

From Ernest I. Reveal

"I want to add my testimony regarding **The Sword of the Lord**. It has proven a blessing to thousands in the Tri-State area and here in Evansville, especially the sermons published in this paper from week to week. I know of no

other publication that has more Scriptural, fundamental, and spiritual messages than those in **The Sword of the Lord**. The editor and the staff wait upon the Lord in prayer and are led by the Spirit of God, giving out the Word with no unsounding note, and thousands have been saved through its message.

"The secret of it all is: It has one message, no man seen save Jesus only. My prayer is that the coming years will prove more and more its soul-winning value to saint and sinner to 'redeem the time for the days are evil.'

"As ever, yours in the Phil. 1:6 way,"

(Signed) Ernest I. Reveal, Supt.,
Evansville Rescue Mission, Evansville, Ind.

From Dr. V. Raymond Edman

"Thank you for the good word of October 30, regarding the increasing ministry of **The Sword of the Lord**, and the prayer that the total number of subscribers would be at least 50,000 by the time of Dr. Rice's fiftieth birthday. We shall be standing with you in prayer to that end.

"Evangelism is a minor or missing note in many Christian publications, it seems to me. It is, therefore, especially helpful that **The Sword of the Lord** should major in evangelism, so that the gospel message will be brought emphatically to those who still sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. For a number of years we have had **The Sword of the Lord** in our home, always with great profit and blessing.

"Warmest congratulations to Dr. Rice and you in the work you are doing for the cause of Christ. With warmest Christian greetings, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,"
(Signed) V. R. Edman, President,
Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.
These friends of Dr. Rice's and **The Sword of the Lord** are most

kind in their expressions of congratulations and best wishes, and those of us who are associated with Dr. Rice rejoice with him on this occasion.

Have You Had Your Part In The Celebration?

Hundreds and hundreds have already written in to send their congratulations by means of special orders for subscriptions to **The Sword of the Lord**. Many of you are taking advantage of the very special premium offer being made whereby you may get a beautifully cloth-bound, 381 page book which has just been written by Dr. Rice on the subject: **"The Home: Courtship, Marriage and Children,"** absolutely free with every three 8 month subscriptions at \$1.00, new or renewal. Many of you are anxious to receive not only the unusually attractive book, but also the latest 5 x 7" photographic portrait of the editor which is being offered in addition to the book, to all who send in five 8 month subscriptions at \$1.00, new or renewal.

Why don't you take advantage of these special offers, and at the same time, have the privilege of helping us get the gospel message and the message of revival out to thousands of more homes all over America? Then too, you will want to have a part in helping us present Dr. Rice with 25,000 subscriptions for his birthday, which will be December 11th, won't you?

Send Your Subscriptions In Now!
Time is rapidly passing by, and what you are going to do must be done now! This is true about the subscription campaign as it is about everything else! Why not sit right down and fill in the following order blank without delay? Then you will be sure not to miss out on this wonderful opportunity!

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EDITOR'S 50TH BIRTHDAY CAMPAIGN

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How the First \$1,000 Gift for The Sword of the Lord Came

(By the Editor)

In 1938, I believe, I was called to a city in a mid-western state for a revival campaign. After much urging, I felt led to go, and expected great things from word I had received. But lo, when I arrived I found there had been no money to advertise the meetings, few knew about my coming, and besides, I was unknown. A crowd of not more than fifty, I judge, met me the first service. I had promised to stay about ten days, including one Sunday, away from my work in Dallas, my radio program, and my paper. Crowds grew slowly; a few were saved. Then the pastor asked me to stay over the second Sunday. "I cannot get you a good offering unless you stay through Sunday," he said. I replied that I did not come for the offering, that I was needed at home for the Sunday night evangelistic services at our church, needed for my Sunday radio broadcast, and that I must plan to return after Friday night. Sadly the pastor told how a heavy debt had stripped the people, another payment was about due, and if I did not stay over Sunday he feared the people could not give much. I told him not to worry, that I should not, and after the service that Thursday night I went to my room.

There in my room I faced certain facts, and temptation assailed me. I had expected the offering that would be given me to go on a heavy printing bill. **The Sword of the Lord**, the weekly evangelistic paper which my heavenly Father helps me publish, has never quite paid expenses. The price of \$1.00 a year will not pay all the postage, printing and wages of workers for such a highgrade weekly paper unless the circulation runs above 10,000 copies weekly regularly. I had borrowed \$450 at the urging of a good Christian lady, for six months. It was overdue, and I must renew the note or pay it. Besides, I owed the printer \$270 for printing **The Sword of the Lord** after I had borrowed the \$450. Then I owed \$200 to another printer for tracts which I had been giving away by thousands. At least \$920 needed to be paid soon, and now I was told that for my ten days' work it seemed there would be little pay. Satan taunted me with all the sacrifices I had made to carry on the burden of that soul winning paper, putting into it thousands of dollars of money I could have used on my family. Satan reminded me that I had refused ever to set a price on my services, that I had no regular salary, and that now this was the way it would turn out!

With tears, that Thursday night I turned to prayer. I reminded God of a covenant I had made with Him in 1926 that He was to look after my business and I would trust Him and look after

His, "seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and believing that what I needed He would supply. I remember that I said to God, "Lord, look on the heading of that paper; it has Your name on it, **The Sword of the Lord**." Your name is in big type, mine in small type. It is Your paper, not mine. I did not save myself; I did not call myself to preach. If You want a paper, You pay the bills. If You do not want that paper, then let it die. It is not my worry; it is Yours. I am not going to stay with this little meeting trying to get a bigger offering, and I am not going to fret or worry. Lord, it is up to You to pay those bills!" And so, at last, with peace I went to sleep.

The next night we had some people saved. They took an offering for me. For the ten days' time, the check was \$25.00. They gave me what I asked for expenses, bare railroad fare, without Pullman berth. In sweet peace I took the train that night to Dallas. Though I sleep poorly, as a rule, unless I can stretch out and relax in a regular bed, that night I slept as sweetly as a child in the chair car. The next morning as my train, the Rock Island Rocket, left Wichita, Kansas, the porter came through the car holding a telegram, calling my name. I took the telegram, opened it and read from my secretary, "YOU HAVE JUST RECEIVED CHECK FOR ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR YOUR WORK!"

I walked up and down the aisles clutching that telegram, laughing, praising God in my soul! I could hardly refrain from telling the porter, the hostess, the passengers, how God hears prayer! I told old Satan what a liar he was. I told my heavenly Father I would turn that blessed paper over to Him, and that I knew now He would take care of the bills. I promised I would love Him better than before, and oh, may He help me to do it, always!

That thousand dollars came from a man I had never seen, I had never appealed to him, of course, never had written to him, nor received a letter from him, nor have I had a letter or gift from him since, though I have since met the noble good man. And bless God, I have never since been in distress about the printing bills for **The Sword of the Lord**.

(From the book *Prayer—Asking and Receiving*)



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West Coast Conference on Evangelism Dec. 30-Jan. 6

Sponsored by the Sword of the Lord and Conducted in the Church of the Open Door
Los Angeles, California

By Evangelist Robert J. Wells, Associate Editor

One result of the Conference on Evangelism held at Winona Lake, Indiana, last summer was the insistent demands on the part of Christian leaders from various sections of America that we sponsor similar conferences in strategic cities throughout the nation. Some pleaded with us to give all of our time to such conferences for a period of at least one year, on the grounds that such conferences would do more to rekindle revival fires than anything else we could do. We have felt the weight of this burden which has been thrust upon us, and we are anxious to do all in our power to present such conferences. Although we are not able to give full time to their promotion, we are planning to sponsor several of these conferences in different sections of our country, as the Lord leads.

First Conference to Be Held in Church of the Open Door

When Dr. Louis T. Talbot heard of our plans to sponsor Conferences on Evangelism in various cities of America, he immediately extended us an invitation to come to Los Angeles and sponsor such a Conference in The Church of the Open Door, of which he is the greatly loved and successful pastor. We felt led of God to accept this gracious invitation, and so the first sectional Conference on Evangelism will be for the West Coast, and will be conducted in the church which was founded and pastored for many years by one of the greatest of American evangelists, Dr. R. A. Torrey. This great church seats more than 4,000 people, and will thus afford commodious facilities for a really large conference.

A Truly Splendid Program

The program for the Conference will feature America's outstanding evangelists in a series of messages on evangelism. We believe that the men who are doing the work are the best teachers for those who would like to know how to do the work, and so we are limiting the speakers to those who are engaged in full-time evangelistic ministry. The main speakers on the program will include:

Dr. Hyman J. Appelman, of Ft. Worth, Texas, popularly known as America's foremost evangelist, a converted Jewish lawyer who has been greatly used in great city-wide union campaigns in many of the major cities of America, and who has won countless thousands of souls to Christ.

Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., of Cleveland, Tennessee, founder of Bob Jones College, and for many years one of the greatest of American evangelists. It is generally admitted that Dr. Jones has spoken to more people from the public platform than any other living man. He has had large campaigns in every section of America, and has a wealth of experience to pass on to those who are anxious to see the old-fashioned revival fires burn brightly once again.

Rev. Jesse M. Hendley, of Atlanta, Georgia, one of the greatest soul winners of the south. For many years pastor of a large, flourishing church, and director of one of the most lively soul-win-

ning radio programs in America, now giving his full time to the evangelistic ministry. A fiery preacher of unusual power and preaching ability.

Dr. John R. Rice, of Wheaton, Illinois, editor of *The Sword of the Lord*, and one of the nation's greatest evangelists and soul winners. Dr. Rice has gained a noted popularity through his wide evangelistic ministry and through the many books of which he is the author. He has conducted large union campaigns in some of the leading cities of America, and is now engaged exclusively in union evangelistic campaigns.

Dr. Robert J. Wells, of Wheaton, Illinois, Associate editor of *The Sword of the Lord*, founder of the Dallas Bible Institute, and pastor of ten years' experience, now devoting full-time to the evangelistic ministry.

Attractive Musical Programs Planned

The musical program for this Conference will be under the direction of Rev. Henry Holmbo who will direct a large chorus choir as well as the congregational singing. Rev. Holmbo is well-known as a gospel soloist and song leader, and is a Youth for Christ leader of great success. There will be special musical features at every session of the Conference, and incidentally, there will be morning, afternoon and evening sessions, all to be held in the Church of the Open Door.

Purpose

Briefly, the purpose of the Conference is: To create a greater interest in evangelism, to rekindle revival fires, and to give careful instruction for those who are engaged in any phase of the evangelistic program. Each of our speakers is offering his time at a real personal sacrifice just in order to have the privilege of making a contribution to this kind of program. They each feel the burden that rests upon them as leaders in the field of evangelism, and they desire to share with others the fervor, the passion and the message God has entrusted to them. We must have revival! Nothing else can stem the tide of modernism, communism, catholicism, and infidelity which is sweeping over the land. May God grant that this Conference on Evangelism for the West Coast may be used of Him to light a fire of revival that will engulf the whole land in its sweep!

You Have an Urgent Invitation

Remember the dates, **December 30th through January 6th**, in the Church of the Open Door of Los Angeles, California. We urgently invite every pastor, Christian worker and layman to spend these eight days with us without fail! You will go away rejoicing and you will do more for Christ than you have ever done before! For further information and program, write:

Dr. Robert J. Wells, Conference Director,
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With the Evangelists

Reports From America's Outstanding Soul Winners

By Evangelist Robert J. Wells,
Associate Editor

Dr. Appelman Reports Blessings in Moberly, Mo.

Here is a good word we have just received from Evangelist Hyman Appelman:

"For six nights the First Baptist Church of Moberly, Missouri, was crowded to capacity, overflowing into adjoining rooms, packing out every available space, to hear Homer Britton sing and Hyman Appelman preach in the brief revival under the leadership of Dr. R. W. Leazer, the pastor of First Church. Scores of first time professions of faith were registered. Hundreds rededicated their lives. There were many transfers of membership. The noon day services, in the Grand Theatre downtown, drew an average of beyond 200 to each brief period from 12:15 to 12:50 every week day. The people of Moberly, Missouri, by unanimous vote invited Hyman Appelman to come back as soon as possible for another revival."

Dr. Hyman Appelman also reports a wonderful meeting in Saginaw, Michigan, with beyond 600 conversions, hundreds of re-consecrations, and scores of transfers of membership in three weeks. We thank God for the blessed ministry of this great evangelist.

Evangelist Jesse Hendley in Mobile

Evangelist Jesse Hendley of Atlanta, Georgia, writes to tell of an unusual time of revival in Mobile, Alabama. He reports:

"The Lord gave us a wonderful meeting in Mobile, Alabama, under a Gospel tent, where more than 220 souls accepted Jesus and confessed Him publicly as Saviour. It was a victory of PRAYER, and we learned afresh the need of constant, unflinching, believing prayer for revival. As I got up to preach the first night of the meeting, I saw a Christian brother slip out of the tent to a smaller tent by the side, and there he waited on God while I was preaching. Thirteen souls accepted Jesus that first night as the power of God fell. There was great conviction."

"One night a lady came to accept Jesus. She was weeping as she told me her little girl had died a few days before. Her husband was sitting in the back. After the service had closed, one of our workers spoke to him. The worker did not know that he was the father of the dead child, but God gave the actual words for this worker to say. He walked up to the man and said, 'Brother, is there someone in Heaven you would like to meet?' The man dropped his head, broke down, knelt and accepted Jesus as His Saviour and Lord."

"Abiding Fruit"

"Sometimes people criticize evangelists and preachers and say their work does not last. Oh, what an awful lie this is! In John 15:16 God says that He has ordained us that 'ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.' At the close of the opening service, a lady came to me with her face shining and said, 'Do you remember me?' I said, 'No.' Then she said, 'You led me to Christ in Columbus.' Then I remembered. In answer to radio mail, my wife and I and some friends stopped at a home in Columbus and led her to Jesus. She said, 'I'm happy in the Lord and am going on with Him.'

"Unknown Fruit"

"One night as I was preaching, I saw a man over to my left with

his face beaming, drinking in everything I said. At the close of the service he came up and said, 'Six years ago I was sitting in your church. I was a backslider, and God greatly convicted me. I wound up on my knees back in your study with a deacon praying for me.' Then he looked into my face and brightly said, 'Since then, I have gone through Baylor University, through Southwestern Seminary, at Fort Worth, Texas, and I am now preaching in Texas. The other day I baptized fourteen people.' There is fruit that we knew nothing about."

"Compel Them"

"A lady was gloriously saved at the service one night. Her husband was lost, but it was evident that he was under great conviction. She asked prayer for him. I walked up to him as he stood outside the tent, looking miserable, and said, 'Won't you accept Jesus?' He replied, 'I believe on Him as much as anyone, preacher.' I said, 'If you were to die tonight, where would you go?' He said, 'To Hell.' I said, 'Let's kneel and pray.' He said, 'I haven't time.' I said, 'You may take time to die tonight. Please bow your head and pray with me.' He did and repented of his sins, holding his wife's hand all the while. When he lifted his face, he seemed so happy over his salvation. He said, as he walked away, 'Thank you, preacher! Thank you, preacher.' Both of them went away with the gift of eternal life! May God help us to compel them to come in."

"Many Catholic Friends Saved"

"We spoke one afternoon on 'The Coming of the Lord.' A man after the service asked to see me in the side tent. He said, 'I'm about forty. I don't know why I came this afternoon. I was raised a Roman Catholic and started to study to be a Catholic priest, but there were some things I didn't believe, so I gave it all up about ten years ago. I have been wanting to talk to a Protestant preacher for a long time. If I went to a Catholic priest, he would say, 'Have you been attending mass, confession and so forth?' After he finished speaking I asked him to kneel and pray with me. This he did, and asked God to forgive him and save him for Jesus' sake. I then took my Bible and explained the plan of salvation, how that Christ settled it all for him on the Cross. He saw it and believed God. I asked him to come back to the tent the following night, but he said, 'I am sailing to South America soon, leaving for New Orleans in the morning.' Please pray for this man as he sails on the high seas, having accepted Jesus as his Saviour."

"God Blesses Radio"

"We were on the air for only fifteen minutes, but oh, how mightily God blessed our broadcast! One afternoon I spoke for just nine minutes on 'The New Birth.' That night a lady came with her husband. They knelt at the altar. The woman said in her testimony, 'I was saved this afternoon and knelt beside my radio when the preacher made the appeal.' Then her husband stood and gave his testimony that he was saved. Another lady said that night, 'I was the one who called after the broadcast and asked the way to the tent.' Both she and her husband were saved. God is still using the radio!"

"On the second Sunday night, I spoke on 'Eternity.' A man came

with tears in his eyes and looked me in the face. He shook my hand and said, 'What God gave me through this message tonight is worth more than I will ever be able to pay. My wife and I listened over the radio this morning and drove twenty-two miles to be here and now I am saved.' Then his wife and daughter came up and said they were saved. I said, 'I am so glad you three were saved tonight.' 'Three?' she said, and waved her hand towards five others in the line. 'All of us were saved tonight.' There were eight of them who had driven twenty-two miles because they heard the appeal over the radio."

"On Thursday before our meeting closed, a lady telephoned, and said, 'I am a Roman Catholic, and I want to know what you mean when you talk about "being saved." I want to know how to be saved.' I suggested that she come down and I'd talk with her. But she said, 'I'm not well, preacher. I'd like for you to come to my home.' So I drove out to her home and there had the privilege of leading her to Jesus. How earnest she was, and how she wanted to be saved! I am sure that she saw the plan of salvation and found peace."

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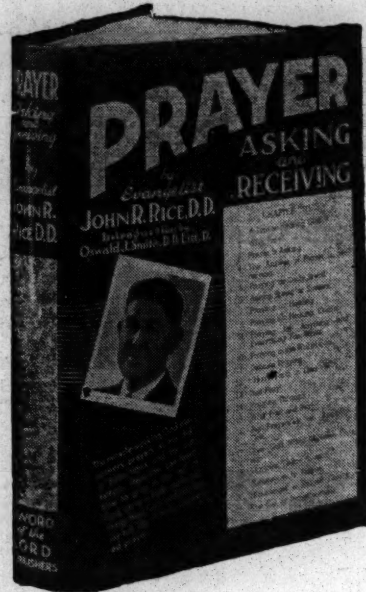
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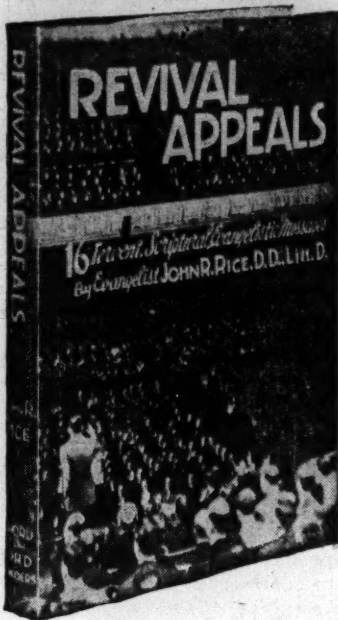
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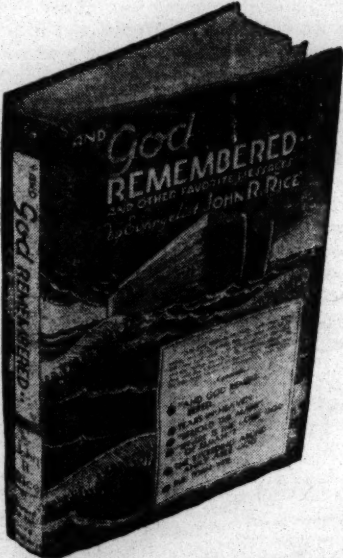
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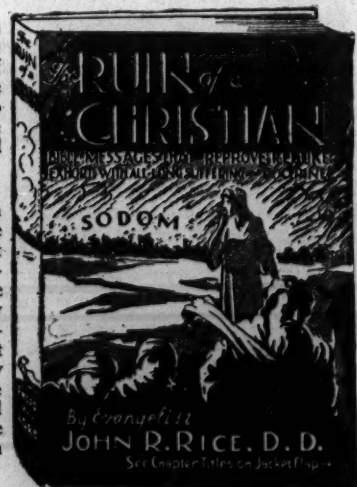
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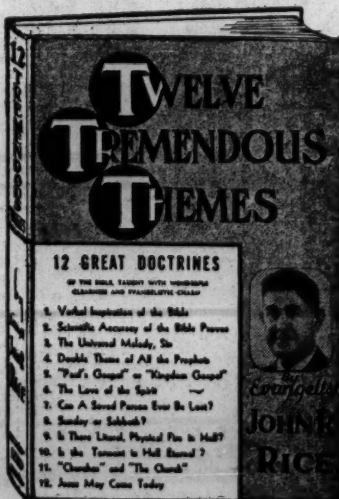
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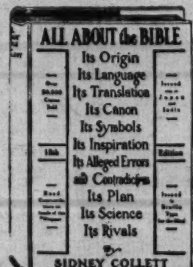
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THE ONLY REQUISITE TO SALVATION

(Continued from page one)

worketh not . . . The promise of salvation is never given to those who work, regardless of what kind of work may be meant. In Ephesians 2:9 we have the thought expressed again: "Not of works lest any man should boast."

The first thing all sinners must know before they can be saved is that salvation is only available to those who do not work. This being true, those who are depending on their self-righteousness, their good moral life, their charitable spirit, their church membership, their baptism, or their confirmation, their good disposition, or upon their attempt to live up to the Golden Rule, and to treat others as they would be treated by others—all such are making a mistake, because God says that it is "to him that worketh not." All forms of human endeavor are excluded so far as salvation is concerned. It matters not what church you belong to, what the form of your baptism was, how fine a person you may be. The Scripture says that there is only one way whereby men can be saved and that is God's way. God is telling us here that His offer of salvation is given only to those who do not work for salvation.

The other day we received a letter from a lieutenant in the Army, written from a little town in the heart of Germany. In this letter the lieutenant said:

"For many years I have been trying to get along on the basis of my own righteousness. I had felt that I was good enough, but all of that time I have never really been satisfied. I have never been really happy. God has followed me all around the world, and through reading the little booklet, 'What Must I Do To Be Saved?' I have discovered that salvation does not depend upon my works, but upon what Jesus has done. And I have trusted Him as my personal Saviour. Oh, what a difference it makes!"

Yes, my friend, it makes a difference. It makes all the difference in the world. But you can never experience the joy, the transformation that comes through salvation until you first of all recognize that God's provision for salvation is for those who do not work.

II. "But Believeth on Him That Justifieth the Ungodly"

After clearly stating that salvation is "to him that worketh not," Paul tells us what the requirement for salvation is. He says rather than working, reforming, or turning over a new leaf; rather than going to church or being bap-

tized, being confirmed, living a good moral life, praying or reading the Bible, rather than any of these things, Paul says, "Here is God's plan of salvation. Here is the way whereby you can be saved. 'Believe on Him that justifieth the ungodly.'"

In Ephesians 2:8 we read: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Do you see it clearly? We are saved by God's grace appropriated by our faith. God does not desire that we labor and strive, but that we trust. In Romans 3:24 Paul tells us: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Here Paul says that we are "justified freely. . . ." That is, at no cost to us; not on the basis of what we have done or could do, but absolutely without charge, ". . . freely by His grace," that is, because of the love and mercy of God toward us through Christ, though deserving the very opposite. We have all as the result of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, that is, on the basis of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. Yes, again we insist as does the apostle that salvation is promised to all who will believe on Him. An illustration of this is found in Acts 16:30-31, where we have the question of the Philippian jailor, when he asked: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Then we have the answer of the apostle, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

The Philippian jailor wanted to know in as brief a time as possible and in as simple a manner as possible, what God's plan of salvation was. So Paul, who was certainly qualified to give the proper reply, answered without a moment's hesitation, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. . . ."

Yes, that is just another way of expressing the truth of our text: Salvation is "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." I know of many, many people who have been working their way through, so to speak; who have been planning and praying, who have been members of a church for years, working as hard as they know how, but never experiencing the joy of salvation. Why is that? Because they haven't come according to God's Word. They haven't trusted. They haven't believed. They have only worked.

God insists through His apostle

in this passage of Scripture that any man who comes to Him, apart from works, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, can be saved. Will you notice that I said "any" man. Perhaps some one who hears my voice wonders whether or not he is included in this possibility; some one who feels that he is too great a sinner to be saved, and for you I want to point out in the text one particular word, "ungodly." We have a Saviour who justifies the ungodly. Men do not need justification unless they are ungodly. They do not need to be saved. All who are ungodly need to be saved and must readily admit that such is true. Remember that "all have sinned. . . ." This means all are ungodly, for in the sight of God there is no difference, regardless of what your background may have been or how deeply you may have gone into sin. God says that He justifies ungodly people. Can you measure up to that? A murderer is an ungodly person. Then he can be justified. A thief is an ungodly person. But he can be saved. An immoral man is ungodly. Then he too can be saved. A drunkard is ungodly. Yet he can be saved. Yes, regardless of what your sin is or may have been, remember that salvation is offered to you on the ground of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who "justifies the ungodly."

III. "His Faith Is Counted for Righteousness"

What is it that God accepts for righteousness? On what basis does God declare a man righteous? Here it is in our text: ". . . his faith is counted for righteousness." Not his church membership, not his works, not his baptism, not his confirmation, not his morality, not his living up to the Golden Rule, but "his faith is counted for righteousness." Would you be a righteous man, woman, boy or girl, that is, would you be right with God? Would you be a right one? A right person? Then, you must believe. You must have faith in God. What I am about to say may seem shocking, but I say it for your own good. You may be a good moral person, you may be a member of a church, you may have been brought up in a Christian home, you may have been brought from the Cradle Roll on up in a good church, you may have been baptized, you may have lived an exemplary life in almost every way, you may be respected beyond all others in your community; but if you have not come to the Lord Jesus Christ on the basis of faith, if you have not come as a sinner, trusting Him to forgive you, cleanse you, and save you from your sin, then you are not a right person. You are still ungodly and a wicked person in the sight of God. Men may respect and admire you, your friends may think you are all right, but the Word of God declares that you are unrighteous, that if you die in your present condition you will die without God, without Christ, and go into a world without hope, ending in Hell.

Beloved, I am not offering my own opinion nor man's theory. I am not telling you what some particular church or denomination believes, but I am giving you the Word of God. This is God's Word. It never contradicts itself. It means exactly what it says. So, if you do not know Christ as your personal Saviour, if you have not trusted Him to save you from your sins, then will you right now turn to Him without delay, will you say, "I have been mistaken. I thought there was some other way when there wasn't any other way. I have been depending upon works or church membership. I have been depending upon my goodness, but now I see I must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ?"

Or it may be there are some who will say, "I am sick and tired of my sin. I realize that I am a sinner, and I want to be saved. I have tried to be saved in other

ways, but all to no avail. But now, having heard the message, and realizing that God says that He justifies ungodly men who come to Him, apart from works, and on the basis of faith, I come to Him just now."

"Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy Blood was shed for me, O Lamb of God, I come."

Will you do it now? Will you

come to Jesus? Won't you let Him into your heart? Will you say, "I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as my own personal Saviour." Will you mean it in your heart? If you will, on the basis of such simple, child-like faith, the Son of God will justify you, will make you righteous in His sight. He will save your soul and you will be on your way to Heaven instead of on your way to Hell. Will you trust Him without delay?

Barriers to Blessings

(Continued from page one)

have that really counts. If we have the wrong spirit, the blessings can never flow to us or through us. Let us look at some of these spirits.

I. A Covetous Spirit Is a Barrier to Blessing

Achan is an illustration of this spirit. He coveted the forbidden things in the city of Jericho. Because of this covetousness he brought defeat to Joshua's army and death to himself and family. God would have blessed Achan and his family, but Achan cut off the blessing by his covetousness.

God says, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me." And then He tells how the blessings are cut off because of our covetousness. When God commands anything, He attaches a promise every time. He commands us to tithe, and then says, "I will open up the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing" (Mal. 3:7-10). There is a real blessing for the tither. If you love money; if you keep it and spend it for yourself; if you keep that from God which belongs to Him, you are surely erecting a barrier. Why not try God's plan? Why not launch out upon His promises and give Him a chance to bless you? He cannot bless you as long as you erect a barrier by your own covetousness.

One of the Ten Commandments reads, "Thou shalt not covet" (Exodus 20:17). Sometimes when we see others enjoying the things which we do not have, immediately something rises within us, something terrible and hurtful, the spirit of covetousness. We ought immediately to kill that spirit as we would a rattlesnake, because covetousness cuts off the blessings of God.

II. A Rebellious Spirit Is a Barrier to Blessing

Take the case of Jonah. God wanted to bless him, wanted to make him a blessing to the people of Nineveh. To this preacher he said one word, "Go." That is a small word, but it carries a big blessing with it. But the preacher said to God, "No." This is a small word, too, but it cuts off the blessing. There came a time when God conquered Jonah's rebellious spirit, but the Lord had to send Jonah through much trouble before the preacher learned his lesson.

I have seen people rebel against God. A loved one dies . . . they don't think it is right, so they cry out, "He shouldn't have been taken away from us!" Or they have a hard time and they say, "Why has this happened to me?" God is blamed for all of their trouble. With their rebellious spirit they build a wall and no blessings can get over it. God has a plan for your life, but if you rebel against that plan, you cannot expect the blessings of God.

III. A Worldly Spirit Is a Barrier to Blessing

Demas is an illustration of this point. He was a young man who one day heard Paul preach. He was charmed by the personality of the preacher. . . . every word was a challenge to his heart. In a great moment of spiritual ecstasy he cried out, "I will leave everything and go with this man in the service of Jesus Christ." Wasn't that fine? There isn't anything more romantic than a young man adventuring for Christ. Demas started out in a fine way. He

was right by Paul's side. He was a joy and a help to him. But as they journeyed to the great city, the bright lights of the world blinded the eyes of Demas. Then we read these sad words spoken by Paul: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (II Tim. 4:10). Thus Demas cut off every blessing for himself and for others whom he might have served.

Oh, there are so many like Demas in the world! They start out for Christ in a wonderful way. Then one day the world calls to them. They listen. They follow. From that moment Christ and the church have no room in their lives. The blessings cease to come to them and through them.

Many of you in your social life have friends whom you could help toward Christ, toward the church, toward Heaven, but you do the worldly things which they do and you have no influence over them. God wants you to be a channel through which His blessings go flowing to these friends. Instead, because of your worldly spirit, you have become a barrier.

A man bought a sub-division and went out to develop it. Said he to his pastor, "Pastor, I will not be at church for a while. When I have sold off these lots, then I

(Continued on page eight)

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will be back." The lots were soon sold, but he did not come back. They hardly ever do come back. When the spirit of the world gets hold of a man, it always takes him down.

IV. A Prayerless Spirit Is a Barrier to Blessing

James says, "Ye have not because ye ask not" (Jas. 4:2). He is telling us that God wants us to have the blessings, but we choke the channels when we neglect to pray. Sometime ago a young man was starving in an attic, although his father was a very rich man. When the father was notified, he said, "Oh, if I had only known! If he had only called upon me, I would have given him anything I have!" How foolish it was for the man to starve simply because he refused to ask! God has all that we need. If we do not get all that we need, it is because we are not asking for it.

"Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear; All because we do not carry, Everything to God in prayer."

John Knox of Scotland invited to his house some friends to meet a group of other people. After a time they missed their host. A search was made and he was found in the garden, his face buried in his hands. In deep agony he was crying, "O God, give me Scotland or I die!" God did something through him. Scotland never lost the definite spiritual impact that came to her through John Knox. God can use us, too, if we will but pray.

V. An Unforgiving Spirit Is a Barrier to Blessing

Jesus had the right spirit. It is the day of the Crucifixion. He journeys out from the city of Jerusalem, down the Via Dolorosa to a place called Calvary. Soon three crosses are outlined against the sky. On them are three men dying in agony and blood. The crowd is taunting and jeering. From the center cross I hear a voice. . . . Is that man condemning? Is He cursing? No, He is praying. Listen to Him, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

What? Did we hear Him aright? Yes, that was His prayer. . . . He had the right spirit. As they were killing Him, He prayed for forgiveness for those who were committing the deed. Hear me, my friends, if you do not have this same spirit you are not following Jesus; the blessings of God cannot flow to you nor through you.

One of our preachers was conducting a meeting in Virginia. For years the church organist and another member had not spoken to each other. But the power of God's spirit came upon the meeting. One night the organist led her former enemy to the front, saying to the preacher, "I want to present my friend to you." In the back of the church stood the daughter of that organist. She had stayed out of the church for many years because of the attitude of her mother. Soon she came down the aisle, sobbing, to accept Christ. The barrier had been removed. There are such tragedies all around us. You are hindering someone if you have an unforgiving spirit.

VI. A Critical Spirit Is a Barrier to Blessing

A learned man said one day to Mr. Moody, "You made thirty-eight grammatical errors in your sermon today." Mr. Moody replied, "I am quite sure that I must have made even more than that. I have not had the educational advantages that you have had. But I am trying to use all that I have for the glory of God. Are you?" How much did that man get out of Mr. Moody's sermon? The man who looks only for the mistakes of others finds very little in life to enrich himself.

Criticism is the poorest substitute in the world for service. Sometime ago I saw a good motto in a store. It read like this: "Come in without knocking. . . . go out the same way!" Let's not belong to the "knockers' gang."

In our critical way we often

judge men by what we have seen, when really and truly we do not know their hearts. We throw our self-righteous robes around us, we flash our critical eyes upon them and say, "Thank God, I am not like these other men." And yet we do not know the things that are deep down in their hearts. In many ways they may be many times finer than we are. A critical spirit is a barrier to blessing. Let us get rid of it.

VII. An Indifferent Spirit Is a Barrier to Blessing

Gallio is our illustration here. He was a deputy at Corinth. When Paul was brought before him he had a chance to hear a great man deliver a great message. But we read his character in these words: "Gallio cared for none of these things."

This is true of so many people today. God blesses the church in a wonderful way. Souls are being saved and happy fellowship is being enjoyed. "Were you at church yesterday?" you ask someone on Monday. "No, I wasn't there," is the reply. Then you must listen to a long string of excuses. But the sum total of all that is said is this: "I care for none of these things."

The Psalmist said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." But you say, "I care for none of these things." In Hebrews 10:25 we read, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." But you say, "I care for none of these things."

Our churches have millions of members today, but the majority of them have an indifferent spirit. Yet our communities would not be worth living in if they lost the influence of our churches. Let us be different from Gallio. Let us show that we do have a real concern for the things of God.

VIII. A Spirit of Self-Glorification Is a Barrier to Blessing

There are some people who speak very piously of their religion. They tell you how much they love the Lord and His work, but if they can't have a job where they receive most of the glory they immediately resign. Why can't we serve God in a small place? Browning said, "All service ranks the same with God." It would be a poor army if all the men were generals. We need some privates. It is even so with the church. The

spirit of self-glorification is indeed a barrier to blessing.

IX. A Disobedient Spirit Is a Barrier to Blessing

Look at King Saul. He was chosen by the Lord for a mighty work. He had a great future as the leader of God's people. But there came a time when he disobeyed the voice of God, and God was forced to say to him, "Since you have disobeyed me, I must take the Kingdom from you and give it to another." Contrast King Saul to the Apostle Paul. "What would you have me do?" asked Paul. "I will show you how much you must suffer for my name's sake," replied the Lord. Paul wasn't disobedient to the Heavenly vision, for he tells us later, "I was not disobedient." Because of his obedience the Lord sent blessings through him to multitudes of souls. No wonder he could say at the end of the way, "I have fought a good fight. . . . there is laid out for me a crown of righteousness."

Is God telling you that a certain course is right? In obedience is a blessing for you and for others. In your disobedience you erect a barrier and cut off blessings which might come to you and to them.

Do you have any of these wrong

spirits within your heart? If so, you are hurting not only yourself but others. God wants us to be channels, not reservoirs. There are many around us who need His blessings. But if our lives are choked with wrong, they will never receive them.

Dr. S. D. Gordon tells this story about a certain city. There was a great reservoir which supplied the city with its water supply. One day the water supply failed. They sent men out to investigate but they could not learn why the water wasn't flowing into the city. Then they received a letter from a city employee who had just been discharged. "In a certain place you will find a plug in the pipe," the letter read. "I placed it there in my anger." The workmen were soon on the job, the plug was pulled out, then again the fresh sparkling water came rushing down to refresh the city. Oh friend, pull the plug out! Take out that old plug of an ugly un-Christian spirit. Find the thing that stands between you and God. Tear it out by the roots. Cast it aside. Then the blessings of God will flow into your own life and out to refresh the lives of others.

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